

REMARKS

Claims 26 through 73 and 75 through 78 are pending in the application. Claims 1 through 25 were previously canceled. Claim 74 is canceled by the present amendment, and claims 76 through 78 are newly added.

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner has allowed claims 52 through 72. Applicants also note that claims 29, 30, 34 through 36, 38 through 40, 49 and 74 are objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

On November 20, 2003, Applicants conducted a teleconference with Examiner Pritchett. Applicants thank Examiner Pritchett for making time for the teleconference.

In the Office Action, claims 26, 32, 33, 37, 41 through 43, 48, 50, 51, 73 and 75 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,186,632 to Chapman et al. (hereinafter "the Chapman et al. patent"). Additionally, claims 27 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Chapman et al. patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,369,511 to Amos (hereinafter "the Amos patent"), and claims 44 through 47 are rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Chapman et al. patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,198,793 to Schultz et al. (hereinafter "the Schultz et al. patent"). Thus, all of the rejections are based, either completely or primarily, on the disclosure of the Chapman et al. patent.

Of the rejected claims, three are independent, namely claims 26, 73 and 75. During the aforementioned teleconference, the Examiner agreed that the Chapman et al. patent does not disclose the elements of claims 26, 73 and 75. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 26, 73 and 75, and any claims that depend therefrom, are novel and patentable over the Chapman et al., Amos, and Schultz et al. patents, whether these patents are considered individually or in combination with one another.

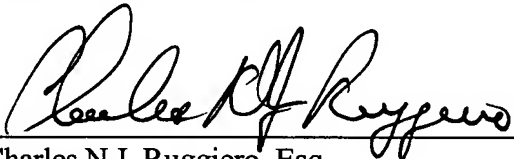
Nevertheless, Applicants are proposing amending claims 26 and 75 in order to more clearly articulate a combination of features that Applicants believe are patentable. Applicants are proposing amending claim 73 to include the recital from allowable claim 74. Applicants respectfully submit that none of these amendments are intended to limit the scope of any term of any of the claims, and as such, the Doctrine of Equivalents should be available for all of the terms of all of the claims.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the claim rejections. Applicants also request withdrawal of the finality of the Office Action.

In view of the Applicants' request for withdrawal of the finality of the Office Action, Applicants are proposing adding claims 76 through 78 to even further provide the claim coverage that Applicants appear to deserve based on the prior art that was cited by the Examiner. A favorable consideration that also results in the allowance of claims 76 through 78 is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

February 25, 2007
Date


Charles N.J. Ruggiero, Esq.
Reg. No. 28,468
Attorney for the Applicants
Ohlandt, Greeley, Ruggiero & Perle, L.L.P.
One Landmark Square, 10th Floor
Stamford, CT 06901-2682
Tel: 203-327-4500
Fax: 203-327-6401